

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 13863 051352Z

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TAGS: PFOR, MARR, TH

SUBJ: THANOM ON U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

1. FOLLOWING ARE EXTRACTS OF THE COMMENTS OF PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTIKACHORN ON THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN THAILAND FROM THE PRIME MINISTER'S SEPTEMBER 5 PRESS CONFERENCE.

REPORTER: COULD YOU MAKE A STATEMENT ON RESULTS OF NEGOTIATIONS HELD YESTERDAY FOR THE FURTHER WITHDRAWALS OF AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES FROM THAILAND.

THANOM: SINCE YOU HAVE ASKED A QUESTION THERE IS SOME INFORMATION I CAN GIVE YOU. REPRESENTATIVES OF THAILAND AND OF THE UNITED STATES HELD ANOTHER MEETING YESTERDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, AT 9:30 A.M., IN ORDER TO REVIEW ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE FIRST WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES AND TO HOLD CONSULTATIONS ON FURTHER WITHDRAWALS. BOTH SIDES REACHED AGREEMENT ON SEPTEMBER 4 FOR THE WITHDRAWAL

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 13863 051352Z

OF THE 561ST SQUADRON OF TACTICAL FIGHTERS, WHICH HAS

12 F-105S AND 220 MEN, FROM KORAT AIRBASE. THIS WITHDRAWAL WILL START BEFORE 6:00 A.M. ON SEPTEMBER 6. THE 58TH SQUADRON OF TACTICAL FIGHTERS--18 F-4S AND 420 MEN--WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE UBON AIRBASE. THE 336TH SQUADRON OF TACTICAL FIGHTERS--18 F-4S AND 420 MAN--WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM UBON AIRBASE ALSO. THESE ARE TWO DIFFERENT SQUADRONS, BOTH OF WHICH WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM UBON. IN ADDITION, 12 F-111S AND 350 MEN WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM TAKHLI AIRBASE. THIS BRINGS THE TOTAL OF PLANES TO BE WITHDRAWN TO 60 PLANES AND THE TOTAL OF MEN ATTACHED TO THE PLANES TO BE WITHDRAWN TO 1,410. BOTH SIDES REACHED AGREEMENT ALSO FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF 10 KC-135S AND 100 MEN ATTACHED TO THEM FROM THE U TAPAO AIRBASE. THESE KC-135S ARE SMALL PLANES USED FOR REFUELING LARGE PLANES IN THE AIR AND THEY WERE FORMERLY PART OF U.S. STRATEGIC AIRFORCE UNITS IN THE U TAPAO AIRBASE.

BOTH SIDES HELD ADDITIONAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE REDUCTION OF STRATEGICAL PLANES, TACTICAL PLANES, AND SUPPORT PLANES IN THAILAND BY GRADUAL STEPS IN THE FUTURE. THIS, HOWEVER, WILL DEPEND ON THOROUGH CONSIDERATION OF IMPROVEMENT IN THE MILITARY SITUATION IN THIS REGION. IN ADDITION, CONSULTATIONS WERE HELD ON AID WHICH THE UNITED STATES MAY GIVE TO THAILAND AS NEEDED IN ORDER TO PROMOTE AND INCREASE ITS CAPABILITY FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE...

REPORTER: HAS ANY AGREEMENT BEEN REACHED YET ON WHAT THEY WILL GIVE US?

THANOM: WE HAVE NOT HELD TALKS ON DETAILS YET BECAUSE THE NEEDS OF ALL OUR THREE ARMED FORCES SUBMITTED WILL HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY US, THEN PASSED ON.

REPORTER: THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT AFTER ALL WITHDRAWALS OF AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES ARE CARRIED OUT THERE WILL BE ANOTHER 32,000 AMERICAN SERVICEMEN STILL STATIONED HERE. IS THAT CORRECT?

THANOM: THAT IS THE STRENGTH OF MILITARY FORCES
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 13863 051352Z

STATIONED IN THAILAND BEFORE THE WITHDRAWAL FROM VIETNAM. THESE MILITARY FORCES ARE STATIONED HERE UNDER SEATO IN READINESS TO PREVENT THAILAND FROM BEING SEIZED IN CASE OF AGGRESSION BEING COMMITTED.

REPORTER: WILL THIS TOTAL OF MILITARY FORCES BE REDUCED?

THANOM: I CANNOT ANSWER YOUR QUESTION YET BECAUSE
IT DEPENDS ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FUTURE. AS I SAID
JUST NOW, IT DEPENDS ON THE MILITARY SITUATION IN
THIS REGION BEING IMPROVED.

2. COMMENT: EARLY WIRE SERVICE STORIES MISINTERPRETED
THE PRIME MINISTER'S REMARKS AS INDICATING THAT AN
ADDITIONAL 1500 MEN WOULD BE WITHDRAWN AS THE SECOND
TRANCHE. EMBASSY AND MACHTHAI, AS WELL AS THE PRIME
MINISTER'S PRESS SECRETARY, HAVE TAKEN STEPS TO CORRECT
THIS ERRONEOUS REPORT. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS HAS INFORMED
THE MACHTHAI PAO THAT IT WILL FILE A CORRECTION.
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